

# THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

## INSIDE

Brigade members learn about Cuba, organize to defend revolution

— PAGE 7

## 'Don't vote for either the Democrats or Republicans'

BY MARY MARTIN

"It seems like what happens now is the party that's elected doesn't change anything. Then the other one gets in," Benito Cruz, one of a group of farmworkers in Santa Rosa, a city in the heart of California wine country that

### SWP FALL 'MILITANT,' BOOK, FUND DRIVE

was hit hard by recent wildfires, told Socialist Workers Party members Betsey Stone and Eric Simpson Oct. 22. "Next election, workers shouldn't vote for either party. That would show our power."

"We need our own party to get change. The Socialist Workers Party is building a working-class party to fight to take power from the capitalists," Stone said. The SWP members had been invited to sit down and talk outside the farmworkers' apartment. "Workers have a lot of potential power. We are a majority. We produce ev-

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### Fall campaign to sell *Militant* subscriptions and books

Sept. 16 - Nov 21(Week 5)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
<b>UNITED STATES</b>				
Albany	95	39	95	40
Atlanta	85	49	85	40
Chicago	115	63	115	53
Colorado	30	7	30	6
Lincoln	30	14	30	13
Los Angeles	135	63	135	42
Miami	45	21	45	19
New York	180	97	180	89
Oakland	125	95	135	87
Philadelphia	70	41	70	28
Seattle	105	61	105	42
Twin Cities	75	32	75	44
Washington	80	49	80	33
Total U.S.	1,170	631	1,180	536
Prisoners	20	13		
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>				
London	65	43	65	29
Manchester	60	34	60	25
Total U.K.	125	77	125	54
<b>CANADA</b>				
Montreal	60	30	60	32
Vancouver	45	25	45	20
Total Canada	105	55	105	52
New Zealand	50	30	50	20
Australia	45	26	45	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,515</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>1,505</b>	<b>679</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>833</b>

## Rallies hit Iraq, Iran attacks against Kurds

Washington gave green light to assault



Elizabeth Fitt/SOPA/ZumaWire via Alamy

Kurds who fled Kirkuk after assault by Tehran-backed Iraqi forces protest at U.S. Consulate in Erbil, Oct. 20. Washington, Tehran, Baghdad, Ankara all oppose Kurdish independence.

BY SETH GALINSKY

The fight of the Kurdish people in Iraq for national independence faces further war moves by the Iraqi army and Tehran-allied militias. The Kurds also face economic sanctions and military threats from the Turkish, Iranian and Syrian governments, as Washington continues to give the opponents of the Kurds a green light to move against them.

Kurdish Regional Government President Masoud Barzani Oct. 21 called for worldwide protests to back "the oppressed voice and peaceful

message of the Kurdistan Region."

Actions the same day at the U.S. Consulate in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdish region, protested the attacks. There have also been demonstrations in London, Stockholm, across Canada and in the U.S.

"We urge working people in the U.S. and around the world to help initiate and join protests in defense of the Kurdish people's struggle," Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York, told the press Oct. 18. The SWP "demands

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## 'We need to know and defend the legacy of Thomas Sankara'

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

WASHINGTON — "Our young generation needs meetings like this. We need to know our history. We need to know the legacy of Thomas Sankara, in order to defend it," Arouna

Saniwidi, 35, told the *Militant*. Along with seven Burkinabe co-workers and friends, he drove from New York to attend the Sixth Thomas Sankara conference here Oct. 14.

Thomas Sankara was the central leader of the 1983-87 popular revolution in Burkina Faso. This is the 30th anniversary of his assassination, which marked the fall of the revolutionary democratic government he led. The annual conference brings together people from many countries and a broad range of backgrounds to discuss and debate the legacy of one of the great revolutionary leaders of the 20th century, who is an example for workers and youth in Burkina Faso, in Africa and worldwide.

Five of Sankara's brothers and sisters — Paul, Pascal and Pauline, who live in Washington, and Colette and Florence, who live in Burkina Faso — participated in the meeting. More than 100 people attended, almost half

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## Working-class solidarity got many out of harm's way in Calif. wildfire

BY NORTON SANDLER

SANTA ROSA, Calif. — On Oct. 19, Socialist Workers Party campaigners Eric Simpson, Raul Gonzalez and myself spent several hours talking to workers here, part of Sonoma and Napa counties in Northern California hit hard in recent weeks by rapidly spreading fires. The fires resulted in

Continued on page 9

## Protest US economic war against Cuban Revolution!

The following statement was issued by Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York, Oct. 25.

The Socialist Workers Party urges you to join protests around the country Nov. 1 when the U.N. General Assembly once again takes up Wash-

### SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT

ington's 57-yearlong economic war on Cuba and its revolution. We demand: End the U.S. economic war against Cuba! U.S. out of Guantánamo! Halt all the "regime change" programs against the Cuban Revolution!

The U.S. rulers have never forgiven

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## GIs come back from horrors of imperialist war to carnage at home

BY ANTHONY DUTROW

"Thank you for your service" is the condescending remark all veterans have heard a million times from government personnel and others.

### AS I SEE IT

It's now the title of an upcoming film based on a 2013 book by David Finkel that follows the lives of returning Iraq war veterans. It remains to be seen how truthfully it portrays the U.S. government's scandalous treatment of

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Ukraine miners: 'Two months without wages!!!'

# Protests hit Madrid move to impose rule over Catalonia

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The Spanish rulers have moved to impose direct rule over Catalonia, sacking the region's elected president along with his entire cabinet. This is the latest in a series of attacks by the Spanish government on Catalonia's autonomy and the Catalan people's national rights.

Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets in Barcelona and across the province protesting Madrid's autocratic decrees, imprisonment of independence advocates and thuggish police assaults.

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy proposed Oct. 21 that the Spanish Senate remove Catalan President Carles Puigdemont, run Catalonia's ministries directly from Madrid and sharply limit the legislative powers of the Catalan parliament. The Senate will vote on Oct. 27.

Rajoy said he has to invoke these measures to "restore the rule of law, co-existence and the economic recovery."

Madrid will also take charge over Catalonia's police force and the public TV channel to "guarantee political pluralism, social, cultural and territorial balance," as well as "respect for the Spanish Constitution's principles and values."

Madrid hopes to quell a movement for self-determination that has been growing in recent years. The clash came to a head Oct. 1 when the Spanish government sent thousands of police and troops to attempt to stop a referendum on independence it had ruled unconstitutional. The violent

crackdown left more than 1,000 people wounded, but failed to stop the vote. More than 2 million people turned out, roughly 40 percent of those eligible to vote, with a vast majority in favor of Catalonia separating from Spain.

At the same time, the majority of Catalans didn't vote, many boycotting because they didn't agree with breaking away from the rest of Spain. Especially in the working class, while many oppose the brutality of the Spanish government, they don't see separation as the road to defend themselves from the assaults on living standards by the bosses and their governments in both Madrid and Barcelona.

The Catalan parliament will meet Oct. 26, the day before the Spanish Senate, to decide on their response to Madrid's dictates. They could refuse to cede office, deepening the crisis.

Puigdemont signed a declaration of independence Oct. 10, but suspended it within moments, calling for dialogue. Madrid has ruled out talks unless the Catalan president acknowledges that both the declaration and the referendum violated the Spanish Constitution.

On Oct. 16, Jordi Sánchez and Jordi Cuixart, leaders of two main pro-independence groups, were imprisoned on sedition charges for organizing and mobilizing people to take part in the referendum. Tens of



Reuters/Ivan Alvarado

Hundreds of thousands demonstrate in Barcelona Oct. 21, against Spanish government's move to impose direct rule over Catalonia and demand release of those jailed for organizing independence referendum.

thousands have taken to the streets demanding their release. Madrid has threatened further arrests.

Going into the Oct. 27 vote in the Senate, Rajoy has won the support of the Socialist Party in taking this next step to stop Catalan independence. Eight out of 10 senators come from either his Popular Party or the SP, so ratification of the seizure of the reins of government there is a formality.

Rajoy has been emboldened by

broad support from governments within the European Union — of which Spain is a member — including German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron. Capitalist rulers across the EU have no interest in more divisions in an already splintering union, underlined by the outcome of referendums Oct. 22 in the north Italian regions of Veneto and Lombardy, both approving autonomy by large margins.

## THE MILITANT

### US out of the Mideast!

As Islamic State is pushed out of Iraq and Syria, Washington, Moscow and capitalist rulers in the Mideast look to assert their conflicting political and economic interests. All oppose the Kurds' struggle for independence. Map shows recent military moves on Kurdish territory.



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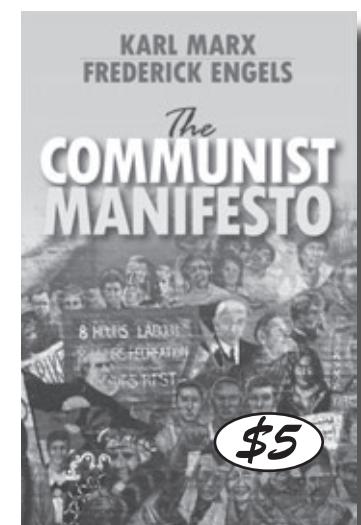
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# SWP 'Militant,' book drive

Continued from front page  
erything, including the wine."

"What are you hoping to accomplish here?" another worker asked.

"The *Militant* newspaper and the books are important to get into the hands of workers," Stone said. "They explain that the cause of our problems is capitalism. That we can do something about it."

Cruz got a *Militant* subscription that he said would be shared with other workers.

Reports like this from party branches, and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, show the open receptivity to the party and its literature in the working class. This is the bedrock of the Socialist Workers Party's fall circulation campaign, talking to workers on their doorsteps. The nine-week drive is just past the halfway mark, with four more weeks to go.

Concurrently with the effort to boost the reach of the party's books and the *Militant*, the SWP is organizing to raise \$100,000 to finance its ongoing work.

Sales of five books on special with a subscription are picking up. "We got rolling on our book sales this week, selling eight books, our highest number yet in one week," Anthony Dutrow writes from Miami. "Four books were sold going door to door. Party member Steve Warshell sold two of the campaign books to participants in a protest caravan sponsored by the Alianza Martiana here to oppose new restrictions imposed by Washington on travel to Cuba by Cuban-Americans."

The books on special are: *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record* and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, all by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes; *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters; and *"It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System,"* by the Cuban Five, five Cuban revolutionaries who were framed up and imprisoned in the U.S. for up to 16 years for defending their revolution.

"We also got our first contribution to the SWP fund from a young worker we met going door to door," Dutrow reported. He got a copy of *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record*, which caught his eye, and said, "I like what you guys are saying" and gave \$5 for the fund.

Members and supporters of the party

## Socialist Workers Party Fund Drive

Sept. 16 - Nov. 21- Week 5

Area	Quota	Collected	%
Albany	\$5,000	\$2,829	57%
Atlanta	\$11,200	\$4,278	38%
Chicago	\$12,000	\$5,645	47%
Colorado	\$700	\$200	29%
Lincoln	\$300	\$106	35%
Los Angeles	\$9,400	\$5,650	60%
Miami	\$3,500	\$1,130	32%
New York	\$17,000	\$5,586	33%
Oakland	\$14,500	\$5,374	37%
Philadelphia	\$4,200	\$1,071	26%
Seattle	\$8,200	\$3,787	46%
Twin Cities	\$4,800	\$1,001	21%
Washington, DC	\$7,250	\$2,223	31%
Other	\$1,200	\$500	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$99,250</b>	<b>\$39,380</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Should Be</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$55,556</b>	<b>56%</b>

who work at Walmart are helping use the drive to lead the party deeper into the working class. From Los Angeles Bill Arth writes that Rhonda, a co-worker at the Walmart store where he works, told him she has a young relative who was recently incarcerated in Washington state, and that prison authorities have made it hard for the two of them to communicate. She got a copy of *"It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System,"* saying she wants to understand what was behind their cruelty.

### Covers news important to workers

Walmart worker Pat Scott in Federal Way, Washington, told the *Militant* that one of her co-workers who picked up a subscription told her he likes the paper because it "covers the news that's important to workers, unlike the TV news."

Glova Scott in Washington, D.C., described how she and one of her co-workers went together to see a film on the life of Thomas Sankara. Sankara led a revolutionary struggle in Burkina Faso and served as the country's president from 1983 to 1987. The co-worker renewed her *Militant* subscription and bought *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record* and Sankara's *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*.

"I renewed because I miss reading about what is going on in the world," she told Scott. "The *Militant* goes out to other cities, other states and other countries and gets the information about what's happening with the working class."

"I visited Deontai Young at his house after work Oct. 20 to speak with him and his dad," said Dan Fein from Chicago. "Young got a subscription a while ago and told me his father often takes the paper to read. His dad had to leave for work shortly after I arrived, but said on his way out that he was interested in reading anything from the party. Deontai and I talked for an hour. He described how the police killed his uncle eight years ago and how they frustrated efforts by his family to get the cop indicted." He got *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, *"It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System,"* and *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*



"Conditions in prisons are terrible, there's no rehabilitation, just punishment," Kate Thompson told SWP member Leroy Watson, in Griffith, Indiana, Oct. 21. She visits prisoners to help prepare them for life following their release. She got *Militant* subscription and two books on special, *Clinton's Anti-Working-Class Record* and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?*

Isabella Graham from Chicago said, "I went to a get-together after work with some co-workers on Thursday at a nearby coffee house. After we talked, they got the *Workers Power* book and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?*

### Co-workers boost fund drive

"Thursday was payday. My co-worker at the Walmart store where I work made the second \$10 installment on her \$40 pledge to the party fund," continued Graham. Earlier in the week, she said, another co-worker got a *Militant* sub and a different co-worker contributed \$10 to the current fund drive saying, "This is for you and your party."

Contributions to the \$100,000 party fund from workers on their doorsteps, from co-workers and co-fighters in union and social protests are an important component of the drive.

Communist League member Joe Young and Steve Penner, a supporter of the League in Canada, report they went door to door talking to work-

ers in Coquitlam on the Lower Mainland, by Vancouver, British Columbia, Oct. 22. Carole Hall, a single mother looking after a sick child, got a copy of the *Militant* and asked them to come back when she had the money for a subscription. She was attracted to *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*

"No, they're rich because they're hoodlums," she said.

If you would like to help us get *Militant* subscriptions from your family, friends and co-workers, and introduce them to the books on special, or make a donation to the party fund, contact the Socialist Workers Party office nearest you listed on page 8.

### Contribute, raise funds for Socialist Workers Party Fall Fund

SWP members are finding interest among workers and youth in discussing how the capitalist crisis is affecting working people, how we can overcome divisions and chart a way forward, and why the SWP is their party.

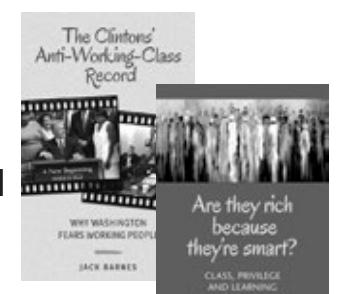
Contributions from workers is the bedrock of the annual party fund, which is essential to cover the long-term work of the SWP.

To donate or help raise money for the fund, contact the party branch in your area, listed on page 8.

### These books just \$5 each with a *Militant* subscription (trial offer for new readers: 12 weeks \$5)

#### Are They Rich Because They're Smart?

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#### The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record

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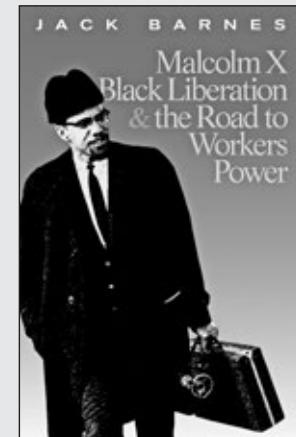
To subscribe or purchase books at these prices, contact Socialist Workers Party or Communist League branches listed on page 8.

## MILITANT SUBSCRIPTION & BOOK SPECIALS

### Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes

\$15. With subscription: \$10



# Actions protest seizure of Kurdish cities, oil fields

BY TERRY EVANS

Kurds and supporters of their right to determine their own future from Kurdistan to North America and Europe have organized protests at U.S. consulates and embassies to denounce Washington's complicity with the attacks on Kirkuk and other Kurdish cities by Iraqi troops and special forces and Tehran-backed Shiite militias.

In Erbil, Kurdistan's capital, protests to oppose the seizure of Kurdish cities and land have taken place at the U.N. headquarters and the U.S. and Iranian consulates. Arabs and Turkmen joined the action at the U.S. Consulate Oct. 20, along with Kurds who fled Kirkuk in the wake of the assault on that city, reported Kurdistan24 news.

The U.S. must "recognize the will" of the millions of Kurds "who want to be free," Mariwan Kestay, a member of the Greater Toronto Kurdish House, which organized a protest of 200 people out-

side the U.S. Consulate in Toronto Oct. 24, told the media. Protests also took place in Montreal and the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa, Canada's capital.

Some 300 people demonstrated outside the Federal Building in San Diego Oct. 23. A large banner read, "Iraqi army and Iranian-backed militia are using U.S. weapons to attack Kurdistan."

"We want a united and independent Kurdistan, but our neighbors are using our oil and don't want us to be independent," nursing student Rozhaya Ali told the *Militant* at the protest.

Kurds marched to the White House Oct. 22 and the Iraqi Consulate the next day. Washington has long opposed the Kurdish fight for self-determination, fearing its impact on stability and broader U.S. interests in the region.

Some 1,000 Kurds and their supporters took to the streets of Cologne, Germany, Oct. 22, while hundreds



Kurds protest at Canadian Parliament in Ottawa Oct. 24, before marching to U.S. Embassy. Actions took place in several North American and German cities in solidarity with fight for Kurdish independence after Iraqi and Tehran-backed militias seized Kirkuk and other cities.

marched in Hamburg and Dusseldorf. Demonstrators in Berlin marched to the Iranian Embassy, protesting the role of Tehran-backed forces in attacking the Kurds' fight for independence. The Iranian government wants to do everything it can to prevent Kurds in

Iran from following the example of the Kurdish Regional Government.

*Laura Garza in San Diego, Toni Gorton in Toronto and Arlene Rubinstein in Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.*

## Washington gave green light to assault on Kurdistan

Continued from front page

Baghdad withdraw from all of the Kurdish homeland."

"In the last 48 hours, Iraq has continued to deploy tanks and artillery, as well as American equipment, including Humvees and Armored Personnel Carriers," the Kurdistan Region Security Council stated Oct. 23. "Iraq has shown zero signs of de-escalating their military aggression against the people of the Kurdistan Region."

In the face of the assaults — and the collusion of Washington — the government of Kurdistan offered concessions Oct. 24, seeking to bring the war moves to a halt. "We are all obliged to act responsibly in order to prevent further violence and clashes between Iraqi and Peshmerga forces," the KRG said.

They proposed "an immediate ceasefire and halt to all military operations in the Kurdistan Region," to "freeze the results of the referendum conducted in Iraqi Kurdistan," and to start a dialogue with the Iraqi government "on the basis of the Constitution."

The Iraqi government claims the constitution, which was written with "help" from Washington, forbids Kurdish independence.

Numerous articles in the bourgeois press in the U.S. and elsewhere blame the Kurds for the attacks, claiming that the Sept. 25 referendum with its overwhelming vote for an independent Kurdistan was a provocation and a "miscalculation" by Barzani.

"It might be the best possible thing that can happen for the Kurdistan region is for Masoud to stand down," the *Wall Street Journal* quotes an unnamed "Western diplomat" as saying Oct. 25.

But the bourgeois regimes in the region — and Washington — have always opposed Kurdish self-determination, referendum or not. Some 30 million Kurds are divided between Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey — the largest nation in the world without its own state.

Washington has relied on Kurdish military forces as their most dependable and disciplined combatants in the fight against Islamic State in both Iraq and Syria.

But with the expulsion of Islamic

State from Mosul, Iraq, in July and from Raqqa, Syria, in October, it was only a matter of time before the governments of Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria — with the green light from Washington — would go after the Kurds.

### Gains for Tehran

The biggest gains so far in both Syria and Iraq have been made by Tehran. The Iranian regime is fighting to gain both a loyal and dependent ally in Baghdad as well as a land route connecting their forces from Iran through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon to increase its power and influence in the region.

This is why Tehran has sent militia forces and its ally Hezbollah to help spearhead a drive by the government of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad to seize territory in Deir al-Zour province leading to the Iraqi border.

While Washington would like to prevent Tehran from making further gains, it is even more fearful of the consequences for imperialism of an independent Kurdistan.

After affirming Washington's support for the "territorial integrity" of Iraq, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson called on Tehran on Oct. 22 to pull its forces out of the country. A little late, given that the so-called Popular Mobilization Forces — the Iranian-led Hashd al-Shaabi — had already been key to Iraqi moves to retake Kirkuk and most of the "disputed" Kurdish areas outside the formal boundaries of the Kurdish Autonomous Region. The Hashd al-Shaabi was responsible for abuse against Kurdish civilians, including looting and burning homes and businesses.

The assault on Kirkuk and other Kurdish towns was made easier by divisions within the parties that make up the Kurdistan Regional Government.

The peshmerga commanders in charge of the defense of Kirkuk ordered their fighters to withdraw without a fight as Hashd al-Shaabi and Iraqi troops approached. These commanders were members of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, a Kurdish party that opposes Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party. While both parties supported the referendum, a wing of the PUK disagreed, and then

ordered the abandonment of Kirkuk.

The Kurdish Rudaw news agency reported that "Kurdish civilians pelted the retreating Peshmerga with rocks as they left Kirkuk. Video showed brave PUK Peshmerga weeping at the orders their superiors had given them."

Heavy fighting took place Oct. 20 in Altun Kupri, the last Kurdish town on the road from Kirkuk to Erbil, the region's capital. U.S.-trained Counter-Terrorism Service units and Federal Police joined with Hashd al-Shaabi in the attack.

The peshmerga said they destroyed two U.S. manufactured tanks, an armored vehicle and more than 12 Humvees. The Kurdish Ministry of Peshmerga said Oct. 22 that large numbers of people were volunteering to join the peshmerga.

Rudaw reported that peshmerga beat back attacks by Hashd al-Shaabi and the Iraqi army near Rabia, on the Syrian border, and Makhmour, south of Erbil Oct. 24.

*Alghad Press* reports the peshmerga pulled back from Makhmour the next day. A "source within the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service" told the paper that government troops and Tehran-backed militia were now moving to take the Faysh Khabur border crossing that connects the KRG with Turkey. This crossing lies next to the pipeline that carries oil from Kurdistan to a port in Turkey.

"The Kurdistan nation with the power of the brave ones, sooner or later, will eventually reach its right and sacred objectives," Kurdish President Barzani said Oct. 17.

## Veterans come home to carnage

Continued from front page

his condolence call to the wife of Sgt. La David Johnson, one of four U.S. soldiers killed in a firefight in Niger, has put a spotlight on the plight of veterans who return home from Washington's wars. In the 17 years U.S. rulers have sent the country's youth to fight and die in these imperialist wars, government figures say over 4,500 have been killed in Iraq and 2,400 in Afghanistan. Tens of thousands more Iraqis and Afghans, soldiers and civilians, have died.

Since 2001, 2.5 million young men and women have served in Iraq and Afghanistan! According to VA documents, in addition to the deaths, which are far lower than those in Vietnam or Korea, these wars have so far caused a far higher rate of disabling injuries.

The key reason for this is improvements in medical treatment that means wounds that would have been deadly before are now treatable. But all too often that leaves you with grievous, lifelong problems.

The figure of 900,000 to 1 million war-caused admissions to VA hospitals in those 16 years are the last figures, released in 2013. The Veteran Administration no longer makes them public,

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# Walmart, Amazon bosses fight for profits, make workers pay

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The owners of retail giants Amazon and Walmart are locked in cutthroat competition as each seeks to edge the other out in their drive for profits. The one thing they share in common is determination to keep unions out of their business, for the same reason.

Both Amazon and Walmart have been beating back competitors amid the deepening economic crisis of U.S. and world capitalism. Nationwide, more than 5,000 retail store closures have been announced over the past year, including by department store chains like Macy's, Kohl's, Kmart, J.C. Penney, Gap and Best Buy.

Walmart, with more than 5,000 stores nationwide located, they say, within 10 miles of 90 percent of the U.S. population, has also moved to consolidate, eliminating thousands of jobs. Over the last year, the company closed over 150 U.S. stores and announced it will open the fewest stores in 2019 in 25 years — a paltry two dozen. The retail behemoth also has over 6,000 stores sucking profits in other countries worldwide.

Walmart is seeking to play catch-up to Amazon in online sales and quick deliveries — arenas where Amazon has had an edge — appealing to those who don't want to take the time to step inside a store.

## Bosses plan drone deliveries

Bosses at Amazon and Walmart have both taken out patents on drone deliveries, sent from fleets of blimp warehouses flying over cities and towns around the country.

Walmart is now offering parking lot pick-up. Customers order groceries online and they're brought to them when they arrive. Walmart bosses say they've hired thousands of workers to staff the new service and that the delivery service will be available at 2,000 stores.

To promote the operation, the company is promising "perks," reported the *New York Times*, including, "Easter eggs hidden in grocery bags, a 'beauty box' for moms at Mother's Day, dog biscuits and discounts for recruiting new customers."

In September the company started experimenting with a new home-delivery service where workers deliver food directly into your home and your refrigerator, even when you're not home. Rest assured, you can watch them with a smart-phone app synced into your home security camera!

With workers facing stagnating wages and declining living standards, the Walton clan, who have made billions by

appealing to working people as a haven for cheap prices, is now looking to expand into more upscale markets.

"With acquisitions of pricier brands like menswear brand Bonobos and trendy womenswear brand Modcloth," *Business Insider* said Aug. 28, "Walmart has been making an effort recently to win over higher-income shoppers." Company bosses are also seeking a deal to add Lord & Taylor to its website.

Amazon's purchase of Whole Foods Market in August gave the e-commerce giant a foothold in the brick-and-mortar supermarket business that Walmart — the largest purveyor of groceries in the country — has come to dominate.

Amazon's push into the food market has had a huge impact on Kroger, the largest standalone U.S. supermarket chain. Since Amazon took over Whole Foods, Kroger lost more than a third of its market value in just three months. Kroger is considering shuttering some 800 convenience stores in 18 states.

Amazon has been opening small bookshops in New York, Chicago, San Jose, California, and other specially selected markets. The shops are aimed at attracting customers looking for a bookstore experience, who then find only a limited number of books. The staff steers them to kiosks to order from the e-tail giant's online inventory.

The books don't have prices on them. Instead, you're told to use your smartphone to scan them.

The prices vary by person, depending on how much you've been drawn into the Amazon universe. If you've purchased an Amazon Prime membership, your price is lower.

The company says the stores are a test to see if they can profit by opening more types of brick-and-mortar stores.

Trying to stay afloat, Target Corp., whose stock is down 19 percent so far this year, has been cutting prices and retooling their "model." Smaller stores, with CVS pharmacies and Starbucks stands inside, are being rolled out.

Trying to keep employees, and under the pressure of protests demanding higher wages, the company, which

## Ukraine miners: 'Two months without wages!!!'



Miners at state-owned companies in both western and eastern Ukraine have held protests, blocked roadways and organized work stoppages over the last few weeks to demand payment of back wages.

Miners and other workers in Ukraine had faced continual periods when the bosses don't pay for extended periods of time — often resolved only when they've gone on strike or organized public actions.

On Oct. 8 and 9 more than 40 miners occupied the underground Kapitallnaya mine in Donetsk. They had only been paid 10 percent of their August wages and little since.

The week before some 1,600 miners at the Buzhanska and Novovlinskaya mines near the Polish border refused to work for almost a week. The Ministry of Energy then agreed to pay July wages, but only to the underground workers. At protest above, miner holds sign that says, "Miners two months without wages."

On Oct. 9 some 70 miners from the state-owned Volynvuhillia mine in the Volyn region in western Ukraine blocked traffic at the Yahodyn checkpoint at the Polish border. They let cars pass by, but trucks were blocked into the evening. Both the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine and the Coal Mining Workers' Union have backed the jobs actions.

There were similar work stoppages over the previous two months at mines in Lviv, Lugansk and Donetsk.

"The miners demand that the Ukrainian authorities settle salary arrears for August and September," Mikhail Volynets, head of the Independent Trade Union of Miners, said in a statement Oct. 18. "If the authorities don't solve this problem, in November new protest actions might take place."

— SETH GALINSKY

employs some 323,000 people, raised its minimum wage to \$11 an hour this month. They promise another \$4 increase over the next three years.

Walmart, which employs about 1.5 million workers in the U.S., raised its starting wage to \$9 an hour in 2015, and says new hires can make an additional dollar an hour if they enroll in special "training." Of course, the goal of the course is to get you to put the bosses'

interests first.

What workers at Walmart, Amazon and other smaller retail competitors need is unionization, in order to most effectively defend themselves against attacks by the bosses. Otherwise, the deepening lash of capitalist competition will mean more and more assaults against workers the company calls "associates," whose wages and working conditions help determine their employers' profits.

## Rally and march for silver miners on strike

Support United Steelworkers Local 5114 at Lucky Friday Mine

**Tues. Oct. 31, 12-2 p.m.**

Hecla Corporate Office  
6500 North Mineral Dr.  
Coeur D'Alene, Idaho

For more info: (208) 744-1774

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



**November 6, 1992**

DES MOINES, Iowa — In the wake of the largest immigration raid and deportation at a U.S. plant in recent time, Monfort packinghouse in Grand Island, Nebraska, announced that it had completed redocumentation of its work force. It has forced the more than 1,300 meatpackers who were left working there after the September 22 raid to produce papers proving their citizenship or permission to work in the United States.

Of the 307 Mexican and other Latin American immigrants arrested in the raid, 285 "chose voluntary deportation." The alternative was to spend two months in a U.S. jail waiting for a hearing.

Many workers who were deported have made their way back to Grand Island to rejoin their families. Workers said the effort to organize a union in the plant continues.



**November 6, 1967**

The deepening intensity of anti-war sentiment is evidenced by the wave of militant student actions that have swept the country. Protests aimed at campus recruiting by the armed forces and Dow Chemical Company have now hit the hallowed halls of Harvard and a half dozen other widely separated universities.

A Navy recruiter was held in his car for four hours at Oberlin College in Ohio on Oct. 26. Students surrounding the car were dispersed by police who used tear gas and fire hoses to break up the demonstration. The college canceled all classes Oct. 30 after 2,000 of the school's 2,500 students boycotted classes to attend a "think-in" against the war. Students demanded an end to on-campus recruiting by the military and a campus referendum on the war.



**November 7, 1942**

On November 7, 1917 the power of the hateful Czarist autocracy — the tyranny of noblemen, landlords, capitalists and exploiters — over the territory and peoples of Russia was overthrown. Under the Bolshevik Party led by Lenin and Trotsky, the millions of workers and soldiers became the rulers of Russia, transformed into the Soviet Union.

From the very first day the party and the men who led the revolution taught the workers and peasants of Russia that their uprising was only the first step in the world struggle for socialism. While bending all their energies to help the world revolution, the Bolshevik leaders warned the Russian people that the workers state would face a grave and ever-present peril if it remained surrounded by a hostile capitalist world.

# Defend Sankara's legacy'

Continued from front page  
from West Africa.

"The conference on Sankara is for the Africa of today," said Gnaka Lagoke, the event's main organizer and chair. Lagoke, a native of the Ivory Coast, is founder of the Revival of Pan Africanism Forum and an assistant professor of history and Pan African Studies at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania.

"The people's movement has been in the streets for months in Togo seeking to end the dynasty's rule," Lagoke said, describing anti-government protests against President Faure Gnassingbé and 50 years of his family's supremacy. "In Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal — something new is going on in Africa."

The panel, entitled "Pan-Africanism Today: A Time for Transcontinental Cooperation from South Africa to Colombia," featured Brian Peterson, associate professor at Union College in New York; Faye Joomay, deputy coordinator of the Pan-Africanist Federalist Movement; Sean Blackmon, ANSWER Coalition; Selome Gerima, an Ethiopian writer and film producer; and Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press.

The program also included a performance of African dance and began with a short video of Fernando González, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), addressing delegates at the Fifth Continental Africa Conference in Solidarity with Cuba in Windhoek, Namibia, in June.

González was one of five Cuban revolutionaries who served nearly 16 years in U.S. prisons, framed by Washington on charges of conspiracy to commit espionage.

"This week we also celebrate the life and legacy of Ernesto Che Guevara on the 50th anniversary of his death in combat in Bolivia ordered by the CIA," said Omari Musa of the Socialist Workers Party in D.C., who introduced the video. "Sankara and Guevara both sought to organize the 'wretched of the earth' to rise up against imperialism, to take power in their hands and make their own destiny."

Most of the speakers focused on Sankara's personal characteristics and his role as a political figure in Africa.

"Calling Sankara the 'African Che' decontextualizes Sankara," said Brian Peterson, addressing Musa and referring to a label that many have pinned on Sankara. "Sankara was fundamentally nonviolent. He tried to transform society peacefully. He explained at the United

Nations that the goal of the revolution was two meals a day and water for every Burkinabe. Of course, we know that Che fought the revolution internationally. Young Africans were drawn to Sankara, because he was an African leader."

As a youth in Senegal in 1985, Faye Joomay said, he went to Burkina Faso to learn from Sankara. "Sankara showed what is possible through his example, and the witch hunt against his supporters after his death proves that his ideas had sunk roots," he noted. "We became Pan-Africanists and use his ideas today as we campaign for the unity and sovereignty of African states."

"Today we are seeing a resurgence of self-determination struggles experimenting with radical democracy across the African world — from the cooperative movement in Jackson, Mississippi, to South Africa with the Economic Freedom Fighters," said ANSWER's Sean Blackmon. "We see Sankara's influence in the EFF's opposition to sexism, homophobia and all the other oppressive ideologies."

Selome Gerima drew from the diary she kept when she lived in Burkina Faso from 1984 to 1989, saying, "President Sankara was tender, friendly. He lived simply. He rode a bicycle, did his own grocery shopping, picked up his kids from school." She concluded her remarks by asking, "Who killed brother Sankara? Was it Compaoré or was it the enemy of Africa — imperialism who used him as a tool?"

Mary-Alice Waters, who wrote the prefaces to *Thomas Sankara Speaks* and two other collections of his speeches, the only places where you can find his political contributions collected in print, explained that Sankara was a Marxist, a communist, and an internationalist who had confidence in the revolutionary capacities of ordinary men and women.

"Sankara stood out among several generations of revolutionary leaders in Africa in refusing to reject Marxism on the pretext that it's a 'European idea' alien to the people of Africa and their struggles," she said. "He came to that conclusion from his own experiences and the struggles of his people. He knew that communism isn't an 'idea,' but the line of march of working people to conquer their emancipation."

"One of the measures of the stature of Thomas Sankara was the importance he gave to the struggles of women," she said. "Both women and men are victims of imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation. The revolution and women's liberation go together."

## Che Guevara postage stamp issued in Ireland stirs debate

BY TERRY EVANS

"It's excruciating to see ... Ireland, a capitalist democracy that should know better, fall for the myth of Ernesto Che Guevara Lynch," grumbled an Oct. 9 editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*. The Irish government had just issued a postage stamp to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the murder of the Cuban revolutionary while he was helping lead efforts to build a guerrilla movement in Bolivia to overturn the military dictatorship there.

The stamp featured a well-known painting of Guevara by Irish artist Jim Fitzpatrick, itself based on a picture taken by Cuban photographer Alberto Korda. Noting that Guevara, born in Argentina, in fact had Irish ancestry, the stamp contains his father's comment, "In my son's veins flowed the blood of Cuban rebels."

The *Journal* editors' class-hatred of Guevara, and fear that his example will continue to inspire youth and working people today, is well-founded.

Che was part of the leadership team forged by Fidel Castro, the central leader of the popular revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in January 1959, bringing workers and farmers to power. It provided a powerful example worldwide of the ca-

pacities of millions of working people to organize a movement in their own class interests and transform themselves.

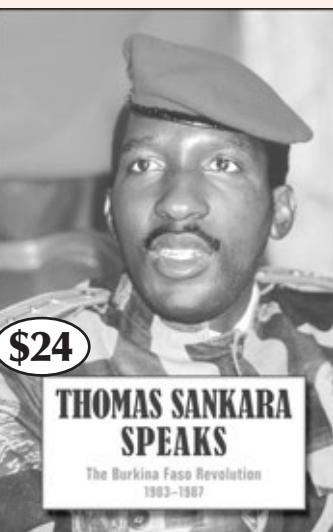
Fitzpatrick painted the image in 1968, he said, because he was "outraged by the manner of Che Guevara's execution." A day after his capture by Bolivian troops and CIA advisers in 1967 Guevara was killed in cold blood. They cut off his hands to prove his fingerprints verified Che was dead.

Less well known than Guevara's iconic image is his dedication to Marxism and communist leadership following the conquest of power in Cuba. He helped draft the land reform laws; advanced voluntary work to meet pressing social needs; served as minister of industry, reorganizing production on a new, working-class foundation; and helped to prepare the founding of the Cuban Communist Party.

The *Journal* editors' class-hatred of Guevara, and fear that his example will continue to inspire youth and working people today, is well-founded.

The stamp's first run in Ireland rapidly sold out and is now being reprinted.

In English and French



pathfinderpress.com



Photos by Mwiza Munthali  
Top, panel at Thomas Sankara conference Oct. 14 in Washington, DC. From left, conference chair Gnaka Lagoke, Revival of Pan Africanism Forum; Cynthia Dawkins, Coalition of Concerned Mothers; Brian Peterson, associate professor at Union College in New York; Faye Joomay, deputy coordinator of Pan-Africanist Federalist Movement; Sean Blackmon, ANSWER Coalition; Mary-Alice Waters, Socialist Workers Party; and Selome Gerima, Ethiopian writer and film producer. Bottom, some of 100 conference participants, most from West Africa.

# Brigadistas learn about Cuba, organize to defend revolution



Militant  
Members of "In the Footsteps of Che" International Brigade at the Portales Cave in Pinar del Río, Che Guevara's military headquarters during 1961 U.S.-organized Bay of Pigs invasion.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

CAIMITO, Cuba — Some 230 people from more than 20 countries came to the international solidarity camp here Oct. 1 to take part in a brigade called "In the Footsteps of Che." They were here to learn about the Cuban Revolution and stand with the Cuban people against attacks by the capitalist rulers in Washington and other imperialist countries.

"It's important to take the Cuban reality back to the U.S. and tell the truth about what's going on," Eberle said.

The brigade commemorated the revolutionary contributions of Ernesto Che Guevara, who fell in combat while fighting in Bolivia 50 years ago this month.

The largest delegation, 67 from the United States, traveled to Cuba as Washington was withdrawing most of the diplomats and staff from its Havana Embassy, alleging they were the targets of "sonic" attacks, and telling U.S. residents not to travel to Cuba.

"It was important that the biggest delegation was from the U.S., given the recent attacks on Cuba," Ash Eberle, 20, a University of Minnesota student on the brigade, told the *Militant* Oct. 23.

Brigade members took part in four days of voluntary work — contributing some 2,500 person-hours of labor — clearing rocks, weeding and planting on farms here and in Sancti Spíritus in central Cuba, where Hurricane Irma damaged crops and delayed planting.

They expected to see evidence of the destruction wrought by the hurricane in September, the strongest to hit Cuba in decades. But what struck them most were the impressive results of recovery work in cities and towns, on farms and at factories, led by the revolutionary government and people.

"It's important to take the Cuban reality back to the U.S. and tell the truth about what's going on," Eberle said.

In Villa Clara province brigade members visited Yaguajay Oct. 6, site of a decisive battle against the military forces of the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in December 1958. The town was hard hit by Irma, but less than a month later houses were repaired or being rebuilt and streets were clear of debris.

**Revolutionary Civil Defense system**

A panel at Sancti Spíritus University the next day took up Cuba's revolutionary Civil Defense system, responsible for mobilizing the government and the people to meet threats like Hurricane Irma. Speakers explained how the revolution's values guide evacuation and recovery work. Many brigade members commented on the sharp contrast with Washington's contempt for hurricane victims, from Texas and Florida to its colony in Puerto Rico.

For the first time in Cuba's history, the entire national power grid went down, but teams of electricians from across the island were stationed in the central provinces to be ready to re-establish power as soon as the storm subsided.

Students and professors suspended classes to go to Yaguajay, said Luis Ernesto Cabellos, president of the Federation of University Students at Villa Clara University. "We joined in cleaning houses and neighborhoods, clearing trees, bringing belongings home. Then we helped decorate the communities."

With characteristic internationalism, the Cuban government simultaneously sent electrical and health brigades to Martinique, Dominica, Antigua and Haiti, and offered to do the same for Puerto Rico. Washington didn't accept the offer.

"What you have done in Cuba is so different from how the U.S. government has abandoned the people hit by the hurricanes," said Milly Guzmán, a Puerto Rican brigadista from Hartford, Conn.

"We had less than 300 men, the dictatorship had thousands," said Tomás



Oscar López: 'Cuba gives us best example of resistance'

SOCHI, Russia — Cuban revolutionary Fernando González (center) and Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera (right) spoke to over 200 young people at a forum here Oct. 19 in solidarity with Puerto Rico at the World Festival of Youth and Students. Over 20,000 people attended political, cultural and other events organized by the Russian government hosts and the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

This was the first time the two fighters have been united since they shared a prison cell in the United States for four and a half years. López won his freedom earlier this year, after 36 years in prison for his steadfast opposition to U.S. colonial rule. González was one of five Cubans framed-up and jailed by Washington for up to 16 years.

"I'm proud to have shared a room with Oscar," González said. "Cuba has championed the cause of Puerto Rico, and I promise the solidarity of the Cuban people with Puerto Rico will never end."

"Cuba has given us the best example of resistance," López said. "If we want independence, we will have to fight. The U.S. government won't give it to us."

"The U.S. government extracts millions from our country every year," said Angélica Acosta, of the Frente Socialista of Puerto Rico. "We don't owe anything." Adrian González from the Puerto Rican Independence Party and Puerto Rican student leaders Jocelyn Velázquez and Maya Rodríguez (left) also spoke.

After Hurricane Maria "Cuba is prepared to help Puerto Rico," said Cuban delegate and panelist Aleida Guevara March, a doctor and Che Guevara's daughter. "If the U.S. isn't going to help, it should get out of Puerto Rico now!"

— RÓGER CALERO

Sánchez Fernández, 80. "But we had a reason to fight hard."

Brigade members heard a panel on the legacy of Guevara Oct. 2 that included economist Orlando Borrego, Brig. Gen. Enrique Acevedo and Luis Gálvez, director of the Cuban Institute for Research on Sugar Cane Derivatives. All three had fought alongside and worked with Guevara in the revolution's early years.

Borrego worked closely with Guevara when he headed Cuba's Ministry of Industry, one of Guevara's many central leadership responsibilities. Borrego recalled how Che rejected the economic policies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which he said were leading toward capitalism, not socialism. Che insisted that factory workers themselves could run industry as they gained consciousness and confidence implementing their revolution.

When the state, with the intervention of the workers, nationalized several hundred companies and needed new managers, Borrego recalled, "Che proposed that teenagers currently acting as literacy teachers in the Sierra Maestra mountains be assigned to take the management posts," arguing they were imbued with revolutionary values and could quickly learn the technology.

Near the town of Pedrero in the Escañabry Mountains, brigadistas met members of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. They described how under Guevara's leadership they were able to defeat Batista's troops, leading to the decisive victory of the revolutionary forces at the Battle of Santa Clara. Batista fled the country Jan. 1, 1959.

"We are organizing a Nov. 8 Twin Cities meeting," Ash Eberle told the *Militant*, "and we'll begin fundraising for the May Day brigade next year."

Sánchez Fernández, 80. "But we had a reason to fight hard."

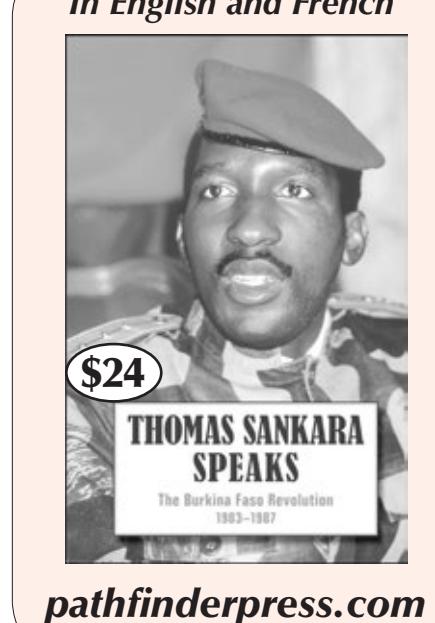
Sánchez thanked the brigadistas for the work they do. "We've had a struggle against imperialism, and we appreciate your struggles. We're fighting for the liberation of the Americas!"

At an international solidarity meeting a few days later, Jack Buena, a brigadista from Zambia, said that many doctors there are Cuban volunteers. But most Zambians don't know about the Cuban Revolution, and think of Che Guevara as an apolitical icon or kind of a rock star. "Now we can explain the revolution and who Che was," he said.

"All out Nov. 1!" read a banner held by U.S. delegates at international night in the camp Oct. 13, encouraging brigadistas to build protests the day the U.N. General Assembly votes on a resolution to condemn Washington's decadeslong economic war on Cuba. Simultaneous actions will take place across the U.S. and in other countries (see ad this page).

"The U.S. government's economic war against Cuba continues, including their occupation of Guantánamo," James Harris, a member of the Washington, D.C., Metro Coalition and of the Socialist Workers Party, told the solidarity meeting. "We can all work together to protest this when we return to our countries." On Oct. 23 Cuba Solidarity in Albany, New York, organized a reportback on the brigade. Ray Parsons, Milly Guzmán and Tim Craine spoke of their experiences and the contrast between how the hurricane was met in revolutionary Cuba and Washington's colony in Puerto Rico.

"We are organizing a Nov. 8 Twin Cities meeting," Ash Eberle told the *Militant*, "and we'll begin fundraising for the May Day brigade next year."



# How US capitalism came to dominate the world

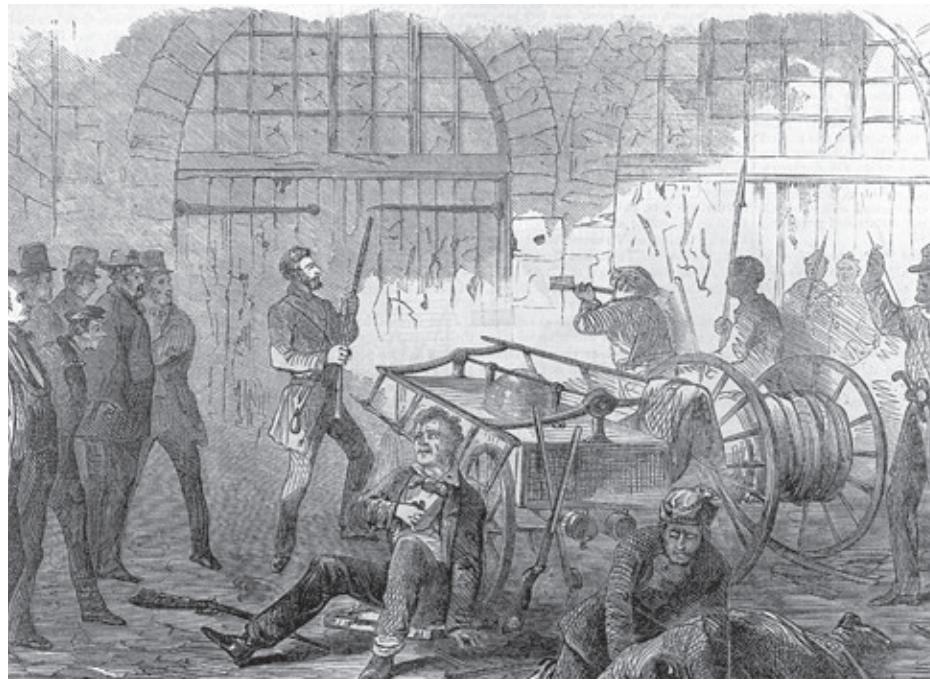
*Below is an excerpt from Understanding History by George Novack, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for October. One of the installments in this selection of Marxist essays is "Uneven and Combined Development in World History." Here Novack applies one of the fundamental laws of human history to explain the development of the modern United States from its founding to today. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

As a result of its victory [in winning independence from British colonial rule], America not only caught up with the Old World but, politically, surpassed it. This was the first victorious colonial revolution of modern times, and it established what was then the most progressive democracy in the world.

However, the American revolution of the eighteenth century, like the Russian revolution of the twentieth century, could not draw upon unlimited resources. The *political* progressiveness of the Yankee republic became combined with *economic* backwardness. For example, the War of Independence did not, and could not, uproot slavery or curb the power of the slaveowners. The backwardness



Library of Congress

John Brown, with rifle on left, leads Harper's Ferry insurrection against slavery in 1859. "The War of Independence did not uproot slavery or curb the power of the slaveowners," SWP leader George Novack writes. "Fortunately a new combination of social forces had been created that proved strong enough to meet and overthrow the slaveholders' counterrevolution."

of the USA in this decisive sphere took its revenge upon the Americans of the nineteenth century.

The American people had for some time to endure the rule of the Southern slaveowners, who later became so reactionary and insolent that they not only prevented further progress but even endangered the democracy and unity achieved by the first revolution. Fortunately a new combination of social forces had been created in the meantime, and this new combined formation proved strong enough to meet and overthrow the slaveholders' counterrevolution.

Historically considered, the second American Revolution (the Civil War) represented, on one hand, the price paid by the American nation for the *economic* backwardness inherited from its colonial youth. On the other hand, the impetus provided by the Yankee victory in the Civil War jet-propelled the USA once again into becoming the leading nation of the world. After all the precapitalist forces and formations, from the Red Indian tribes to the slavery of the Southern states, had been disposed of, American capitalism was able to leap forward with mighty strides, so making the USA today the most advanced capitalist nation and the paramount world power.

This dominant position was not achieved all at once but in two revolu-

tionary leaps separated by an interval of gradual progress and political reaction.

What are the penalties of progressiveness and the privileges of backwardness in the USA today? American technical know-how is the most advanced and American industry and agriculture, the most productive in the world. This not only enriches the capitalist monopolists but showers many benefits upon the American people — ranging from an abundance and variety of foodstuffs to a plethora of television sets, refrigerators, automobiles and other "luxuries." This is one side of the picture. On the other side, the American monopolists are the most efficient of all the capitalists in the world in exploiting both their own working people and the rest of the toilers of the world. While the American worker enjoys the highest standard of living of any worker in the world, he is also the most heavily exploited. This tremendously productive working class gets back for its own consumption a smaller part of its output and hands over in the form of profit to the capitalist owners of the instruments of production a greater part of its output than does either the English or the French working class.

The greatest unevenness of America's social development is that its economy is so advanced that it is fully ripe for collective ownership and planned

production (that is, it is ripe for socialism) and yet this economy remains in a straitjacket of capitalist and nationalist restrictions. This contradiction is the main source of the social insecurity of our age and of the main social evil of our time, not only in the USA but throughout the world. ...

The ideology of the American ruling class is one of the most highly developed in capitalist history. This ruling class not only has a militant, positive philosophy to justify its privileges, a philosophy that it assiduously disseminates inside the USA and internationally, but it is also simultaneously engaged in an unceasing offensive against the ideas of communism and socialism, even though Marxist ideas have spread amongst the people of America to the most limited degree. This anticommunist, antisocialist crusading zeal, together with its acute class sensitivity and consciousness of the class struggle, expresses the American ruling class's forebodings about its own future. In contrast to the class consciousness of the capitalists, the American working class has not yet reached the level of generalizing its own particular class interests, even in the form of the most elementary social-reformist notions.

This indifference to socialist ideology is one of the most pronounced peculiarities of the American worker. This is not to say that the American worker is devoid of class feeling and initiative. On the contrary, the American working class has asserted itself time and time again as an independent fighting force, especially in the industrial field — often with brilliant results. But these experiences have not led to the establishment of a conscious and permanent challenge to the capitalist order — to a mass socialist movement.

The hyperdevelopment of bourgeois ideology in America and the corresponding underdevelopment of working class consciousness are the inseparable products of the same historical conditions. They are interdependent aspects of the present stage of social and political development in the USA.

Today, the political complexion of the whole world reflects the unevennesses of American society — one in the domain of production, another in political organization and a third in social consciousness.

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# Protest US economic war against Cuba!

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the Cuban people for overthrowing the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. The wealthy owning class hates and fears the example working people and their government in Cuba have set: that it's possible for us to make a revolution, and in the process to transform ourselves, to become capable of building a society based on solidarity, not the dog-eat-dog horror of capitalism.

That's why the U.S. government — under Democratic and Republican presidents alike — has never stopped trying to overthrow the Cuban Revolution.

And that's why the U.S. government and the capitalist press can't stop telling lies about the revolution. From the imaginary "sonic" weapon mysteriously harming U.S. diplomats in Havana to the timeworn lies about the alleged lack of human and democratic rights on the island. Washington does everything it can to discourage and prevent workers from visiting Cuba and seeing for ourselves what the people and revolution have accomplished.

There is another brigade going to Cuba next May — organize now to sign on.

Unlike the wild stories the U.S. rulers promote against Cuba's revolutionary leadership, Washington's

involvement in violent attacks against the Cuban people are no fantasy. They include training and financing armed groups that carried out sabotage, bombed planes and committed other terrorist acts in Cuba; numerous efforts to assassinate Fidel Castro; and the failed 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion.

As working people are battered by the carnage from the worldwide capitalist crisis, the example of the Cuban Revolution stands in stark contrast.

In Texas, Florida, and a thousand times more in the U.S. colonies of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, the capitalist rulers left millions to fend for themselves after recent hurricanes. From their lack of preparation to the unfolding social catastrophe wrought by class divisions and capitalist profiteering, the propertied rulers have proven they are unfit to govern.

It's the opposite in Cuba. Workers and farmers there used *their* government to make sure no one was left on their own, and mobilized to use all the country's resources to rebuild. At the same time, they offered volunteers and assistance to toilers across the Caribbean.

They showed the difference a revolution makes. They show the revolutionary road forward for workers here and around the world.

All out Nov. 1!

# Working-class solidarity saved many in wildfire

## Continued from front page

42 deaths and the destruction of some 8,400 homes and other structures.

The crisis facing working people in the area, however, is not simply the result of fires. The dog-eat-dog capitalist for-profit system turned the natural disaster into a social catastrophe. There was no preparation or warning to workers as the fires swept through. Since then workers face a lack of housing, supplies and jobs and profit-gouging at every turn.

Our first stop was a meeting with Nicole Muela and Alondra Gomez, her co-worker at a photo studio. Muela is Gonzalez's niece. The fire that hit Santa Rosa started in the evening Oct. 8.

"We smelled smoke around 10:30 p.m. and my 13-year-old son says, 'something ain't right,'" Muela said. "He walked outside, and it was really smoky. But there was no alarm from the city, so we went to bed."

"The people themselves were the true first responders," Muela said. Many workers we talked to said the same thing. It was working-class solidarity that made the difference in keeping death and destruction down and helping people get out of danger.

"I think people didn't have enough warning," she said. "I got calls from my dad and my brother a few hours later telling us to 'get the hell out.' We piled into our truck and went to my boyfriend's mother's house in Graton. What's normally a 15-minute ride took an hour because of congestion on the roads.

"It was raining down ash and you could feel the heat," she said.

"My cousin lost his house," Gomez added. "My aunt was a patient at Kaiser hospital that night, they evacuated her. They didn't have enough personnel on hand, but her son and other people joined in helping load the patients onto city buses to get them out."

We talked with Tina Silva, who works at a gym. She said she got a call from a co-worker's wife at 2 a.m. saying the city is on fire. There was no warning, she said.

"There was panic and confusion," she said. "People didn't know where to go for safety. It took my boyfriend and I two and half hours to get to Rohnert Park, normally a half-hour drive. All the motels were full." They slept in their car and the next day found out they were among the lucky ones who could go back home.

Silva was eager to talk about the crisis working people face in the U.S. today. "I thought Michelle and Barack Obama were very attractive. They had charisma," she said. "But they let the people down."

She told us she voted for Donald Trump in 2016. "I saw him the same way. He talked straight," she said.

"As a Hispanic woman I voted for him. Some people called me a Mexican traitor," she laughed. "The government treats working people like we're dumb."

They try to inspire fear to divide us. Now I'm scared of how Trump is, threatening countries and people," she said.

## Workers help each other

Like others we talked to, Silva was struck by how working people banded together to help each other in the wake of the fires. "I love the unity that was shown during the fire," she said.

She was receptive to the revolutionary political perspectives we presented, and how we did it — going to workers' homes and discussing the necessity of uniting the working-class and building a powerful movement to take political power out of the hands of the capitalists. She got a subscription to the *Militant* and copies of *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* and *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record* by party National Secretary Jack Barnes, and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters. Other workers we talked to were interested. Overall we sold five *Militant* subscriptions and two copies of each of the three books.

Some neighborhoods in Santa Rosa are home to a number of immigrant workers drawn to the area by jobs in the wineries, hotels, restaurants and construction. "The grape harvest was done and now there is no work in the vineyards," Juan, a disabled field worker, told us. "For those without papers there is no unemployment pay."

While we were talking several people came and went from his house. "We have to live together to pay the rent, which just doesn't stop going up," he said.

Landlords have jacked up rents for area housing 44 percent between 2011 and August 2017 before the fire. Now they've soared 16 times faster in Sonoma County — where Santa Rosa is — and 22 times faster in Napa.

"There are pop-up encampments all over the city," Adrienne Lauby, who runs Homeless Action here, told the *Guardian* Oct. 23. "People are sleeping in the parks, they're staying in their cars — there are still 425 people in the shelters."

At another house we met Francisco, a carpenter, who used to work as a heavy machine operator. We asked if he could get back to rebuilding homes destroyed by the fire. "They only want young people who can keep up with the pace," he said. "Where I'm at they keep asking me to do more things and learn new skills, but when I ask for a raise, there's never any money."

The SWP campaigners told those we met that our party fights for a federally funded massive public works program to put people to work at union scale to build houses, schools and other things workers need in the wake of the fires. We said the jobs should be open to everyone, regardless of whether they had what the government deems proper papers or not.

# GIs return to carnage

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supposedly for "security reasons."

A Stanford University study puts vets post-traumatic stress disorder rate at 35 percent. If accurate, that means more than 800,000 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans will return home with PTSD needing treatment.

The criminal neglect of all veterans, from "peace-time" wars over the past 17 years, and of combat and non-combat veterans over the last 50 years, are an important part of the carnage that Trump talked about in his inaugural address.

"We will take care of our great veterans like they have never been taken care of before," he told the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention in July 2016. He referred to the outcry in 2014 surrounding revelations that 40 veterans died while kept waiting for appointments at a VA hospital in Arizona.

One of those, Thomas Breen, 71, was on an "off-the-books" list VA officials used to shrink — on paper — their overly long waiting lists, to impress bureaucrats in the Department of Veteran Affairs. Breen died in November 2013 of stage 4 bladder cancer.

His son Teddy and Teddy's wife Sally tried in vain for two months to get Breen an appointment. When the VA finally called in December, Sally said she told them, "He's dead already."

## Veterans welcome in anti-war actions

During the Vietnam War, the rulers tried to keep workers in the U.S. who protested against the imperialist war apart from workers in uniform returning from combat. They promoted the myth that veterans were frequently spit upon by protesters. To the contrary, many like myself joined in the powerful anti-war mass marches. The anti-war movement stood for the rights of GIs to know the facts about the war and form their own opinion — anathema to the brass and the bosses.

So far, the Trump administration has done virtually nothing about its promise to upgrade what veterans face when they return home. Veterans continue to confront joblessness, homelessness, high rates of suicide, and a 33 percent higher chance of opioid overdose.

"The pharmaceutical industry has a stranglehold on the VA," Carl Higbie, a former Navy Seal who served two tours in Iraq and is 60 percent disabled, told Fox News. He accused the VA of overmedication, paving the way to addiction.

Some 64,000 people died from drug overdoses last year, in small towns and working-class neighborhoods in big cities across the country. That's more than the total of all U.S. military deaths in the last 65 years.

Caucasians make up 90 percent of all opioid overdoses nationwide. Hardest hit areas are in the so-called Rust Belt, towns in the Midwest hit by factory closures, and the formerly bustling coal-mining regions of West Virginia, Kentucky and southern Illinois.

Why did the back-and-forth tweets between Trump and Congresswoman Wilson get so much press attention? Because her party, the liberal press and a growing wing of the Republicans are determined to topple Trump at all costs for doing what all previous administrations have done — feign concern for those troops killed abroad.

AFRICOM is one of the six U.S. military commands, headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany. It oversees the thousands of troops that the Bush and Obama administrations deployed to defend Washington's economic and political interests in Africa, under the rubric of the "war on terrorism."

The four special forces soldiers killed in Niger were among the 800 troops Washington has based there to join French troops to "train" African military forces. The U.S. rulers have troops in every corner of the globe, protecting the interests of the bankers and billionaires.

Veterans, whose lives have little value to the ruling class after their "service" is over, will be a key part of working-class resistance to the carnage.

## 'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the *Militant* and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.